



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Deputy Prime Minister of Moldova, Victor Osipov

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 24, 2010

The United States warmly welcomes Deputy Prime Minister Victor Osipov to the Permanent Council today. Moldova and the United States enjoy a strong bilateral relationship, and we remain committed to supporting Moldova and its further integration into European institutions.

We appreciate your frank review of the Transnistria conflict. Finding a solution is clearly a long-term process, and it is important to build confidence and resolve practical problems on the ground. Democratic reforms, economic growth, and improvements in the quality of life for all people can go a long way toward making Moldova attractive for all its citizens.

While pursuing these steps, it is important to continue to seek a comprehensive, negotiated settlement to the conflict. We consider the 5+2 format the only internationally accepted mechanism for reaching such a settlement. We have encouraged our partners in the 5+2 to be constructive in resolving the conflict within this format, and we continue to urge the earliest possible resumption of formal negotiations, without preconditions. We seek a transparent settlement that defines Transnistria's status within Moldova and its internationally recognized borders, preserves Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity, facilitates the transformation of the current peacekeeping force into an unarmed, multinational civilian presence under an international mandate, and furthers the implementation of commitments related to the withdrawal of Russian forces and munitions from Moldova.

While we welcome recent international efforts in support of the settlement process, we firmly believe that the 5+2 is the proper format for reaching an agreed, long-term resolution.

Key to our joint efforts is the OSCE Mission to Moldova, which not only facilitates meetings in the 5+2 format, but also supports dialogue between the sides' chief negotiators, promotes progress in expert-level working groups, and conducts events and seminars to build confidence. These activities should remain among the Mission's top priorities.

Turning to other issues, Mr. Deputy Prime Minister, we note that the arrest and detention of journalist Ernest Vardanean remains a matter of deep concern, as do other recent arrests and detentions by Transnistrian authorities. The OSCE Mission's most recent spot report on the situation of detainees Vardanean and Kazak states that their physical health is not in immediate jeopardy; if that is the case, this is welcome. However, the lack of due process that has characterized their cases and others remains a significant problem – one that the Transnistrian authorities have not addressed. The detained individuals should have the right to choose their own legal counsel; the right to be present or to be represented by counsel of their own choice at any pre-trial detention hearings; and the right to contact their families. They should not be forced to give so-called "confessions" on television, in the presence of the security services. As the OSCE Mission itself has pointed out on several occasions, we are concerned that these actions are indicative of a broader problem of ongoing pressure and intimidation against Transnistrian civil society representatives. We appreciate the Mission's

focus on promoting progress in negotiations between the sides, but it is important also for the Mission to continue to press for respect for human rights, due process, and the rule of law in all cases. We appreciate the Mission's ongoing monitoring of the situation and look forward to regular updates on these cases.

We welcome Moldova's support for addressing European security within the framework of the OSCE. We need to strengthen the organization's capacity in early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, and post-conflict rehabilitation; relevant proposals put forth as part of the Corfu Process should be given serious consideration.

Additionally, we welcome Moldova's support for renewed efforts to find a way ahead on the CFE Treaty, strengthen confidence- and security-building measures, and improve military transparency.

We look forward to continued close cooperation with Moldova, both multilaterally and bilaterally. Again, thank you for joining us today, Mr. Deputy Prime Minister.